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SIMPLE HOME TESTS HELP IDENTIFY FABRIC

New weaves and mixtures of fibers complicate the problem of shopping for clothes this fall. Many of the new fabrics baffle the shopper who wants to know what fibers, and what proportion of each, they contain.

The best aid to identifying fabrics is a label that gives clear and complete information. Lacking labels, shoppers may use a few simple tests at home which will help them to know what they are buying.

The burning test is one way of telling whether material is pure-dye silk, weighted silk, or a synthetic like rayon. Fray both lengthwise and crosswise threads in a sample of the goods and apply a lighted match. Pure-dye silk burns with an odor of burning hair and forms tiny black balls. Silk heavily weighted with metal leaves a black crisp skeleton of the weave rather than black balls. Synthetics appear to melt as they burn, give off a slight pungent odor, and leave a hard, glassy-looking ash.

The lye test helps distinguish between animal and vegetable fibers and is useful in finding out just how much silk or wool a fabric contains. Boil the sample of goods for 10 minutes in a mixture of 1 pint of water and 1 tablespoonful of lye. (Use great caution since lye burns the skin.) After this boiling, all the silk or wool will have disappeared, leaving any cotton, linen, or synthetic that the fabric contained.

- 2 - (Simple home tests help to identify
fabric)

To learn whether a synthetic is an acetate rayon or contains any acetate, drop the sample into acetone or fingernail-polish remover, which will dissolve all acetate.

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